

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-11

OMB-01 EB-07 SAJ-01 SAM-01 /077 W

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R 260654Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1522

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 1279

E.O. 11652; GDS

TAGS: PINT, RP

SUBJECT: OPPONENTS OF CHICO RIVER DAM PROJECT DETAINED

REF: MANILA A-22

SUMMARY: IN ADDITION TO ARRESTS OF ALLEGED COMMUNISTS AND ACTIVISTS, REPORTED SEPTEL, GOVERNMENT HAS DETAINED AT LEAST THREE INDIVIDUALS OPPOSED TO CONTROVERSIAL CHICO RIVER DAM PROJECT. AT THE MOMENT IT APPEARS THAT CHICO MAY BE A SEPARATE ISSUE. END SUMMARY.

1. SEVERAL OPPONENTS OF GOVERNMENT'S CONTROVERSIAL CHICO RIVER HYDRO POWER PROJECT IN NORTHERN LUZON WERE AMONG THOSE DETAINED BEGINNING LATE LAST WEEK. THESE DETENTIONS MAY HAVE LITTLE CONNECTION WITH OTHER ARRESTS BEING REPORTED SEPTEL.

2. CHICO PROJECT HAS BEEN FOCUS OF OPPOSITION FROM CHURCH ACTIVISTS AND SOME SOCIAL SCIENTISTS WHO CLAIM THAT RIGHTS OF KALINGA MINORITY WHICH INHABITS AREA WOULD BE VIOLATED. AFTER PROJECT MORATORIUM LAST JUNE FOLLOWING EARLIER ROUND OF PROTESTS, MARCOS ANNOUNCED "MODIFIED" PROJECT IN DECEMBER WHICH HE CLAIMED WOULD MINIMIZE INUNDATION OF KALINGA ANCESTRAL LANDS. AT SAME TIME HE TURNED OVER ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL OF AREA TO HIS SPECIAL
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ASSISTANT FOR MINORITIES (MANUEL ELIZALDE--PANAMIN).

RESULT HAS BEEN RENEWED CONTROVERSY. EARLIER IN MONTH GOVERNMENT THREATENED ARREST OF CHICO OPPONENTS, INCLUDING UNIDENTIFIED FOREIGN MISSIONARIES AND MEMBERS OF MELCHOR'S DEFUNCT EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT WHICH PREVIOUSLY HANDLED CHICO AFFAIRS. (REFAIR BEING POUCHED EXPLAINS BACKGROUND IN DETAIL).

3. TO OUR KNOWLEDGE THREE INDIVIDUALS DETAINED THUS FAR INCLUDE ANTHROPOLOGIST MARIFLOR PARPAN, ESTEBAN (STEVE) MAGANNON (LECTURER AT PHILIPPINE CENTER FOR ADVANCED STUDIES WHO IS HIMSELF A KALINGA) AND VICTOR TAYLOR, A FORMER MELCHOR STAFFER AND (BEFORE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS) EMBASSY LEADER GRANT CANDIDATE. SO FAR THERE ARE NO REPORTS OF ARRESTS OF FOREIGN MISSIONARIES (WHO INCLUDE AT LEAST ONE AMERICAN) ACTIVE IN CHICO PROTEST.

4. COMMENT: SOCIAL SCIENTISTS WHO HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING CHICO CASE BELIEVE CHICO ARRESTS CAME AT BEHEST OF ELIZALDE ARE SEPARATE QUESTION FROM ROUNDUP OF COMMUNISTS, CHURCH ACTIVISTS, ETC. HOWEVER, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT ISSUES OVERLAP SINCE OPPOSITION TO CHICO WAS ONE OF NUMEROUS CAUSES ESPOUSED BY COMMUNIST PROPAGANDISTS WORKING FOR UNITED FRONT AGAINST MARCOS. (ACCORDING OTHER REPORTING TAYLOR ARRESTED AS RESULT OF ACTION IN SUPPORT OF COMMUNISTS-CPP/ML.)
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, DAMS, PROGRAMS (PROJECTS), ARRESTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: izenbei0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MANILA01279
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760028-1147
From: MANILA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760122/aaaaassm.tel
Line Count: 87
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 MANILA A-22
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: izenbei0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 JUN 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <28 SEP 2004 by izenbei0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: OPPONENTS OF CHICO RIVER DAM PROJECT DETAINED
TAGS: PINT, RP
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006